



Hope Community Heats Buildings with Low-Cost Venezuelan Oil

In February 2006, Hope Community began receiving steeply discounted heating oil from Citgo, the Venezuelan oil company. The oil is being provided through an agreement in which Citgo charges Hope 40% less than the wholesale market price, and Hope agrees to pass on the majority of the savings to low-income tenants living in 13 buildings with oil burners.

"Hope Community is delighted to be able to work with Citgo to bring discounted fuel oil to East Harlem," said Executive Director William S. Jacoby. "The residents of Hope's buildings are primarily low and moderate-income families who are particularly vulnerable to the recent dramatic increases in the price of oil and other basic goods. Citgo's generosity is helping these families save money and helping our buildings weather the cost of higher heating bills."

"The Citgo program stands in sharp contrast to our domestic oil industry's refusal to share windfall profits with low-income communities, and an inspiring example of South-to-North aid," Jacoby added.

Hope Community owns 13 buildings with more than 250 units that have oil-burning boilers. The buildings may use several hundred gallons of oil during the course of the agreement, which expires in April at the end of the heating season. Hope plans to distribute the majority of the savings to low-income residents of these properties through rent rebates.

The program is similar to one announced in December in the Bronx by Rep. Jose Serrano and others in Massachusetts, Maine, Vermont, Rhode Island, Pennsylvania and Delaware. In

each instance, Citgo works with non-profit organizations to insure that the savings from the discounted oil sales wind up in the pockets of low-income residents.

Congressman Charles Rangel has played a central role in facilitating the project in northern Manhattan. "While most oil companies reap record profits, Americans are crying for help with their rising heating," Rangel said. "Here is a program that makes heat affordable so that no one has to choose between a warm home or a warm plate of food."

"This expansion of our New York program, along with programs in other states and our unscheduled deliveries of refined gasoline and other fuel in the aftermath of hurricanes Katrina and Rita to hold down price increases, is part of our effort as good corporate citizens to help Americans who need a helping

hand," said Citgo CEO Felix Rodriguez. Citgo is owned by the Venezuelan state oil company, Petróleos de Venezuela (PDVSA).



Hope Community Relations Manager Carmen Vasquez discusses discount heating oil program with Channel 41

Hope Community Calienta Edificios con el Petróleo venezolano de bajo costo

Durante la temporada de calefacción (de febrero a abril) Hope Community recibió aceite para la calefacción de Citgo, la compañía estatal de petróleo Venezolana (PDVSA). Hope recibió el aceite con un 40% de descuento del precio al por mayor y se ha comprometido a pasarle la mayoría del ahorro a los residentes con bajas ingresos de 13 edificios cuyas calderas funcionan con aceite.



Tenants Wilfredo and Marianela Plaza, from 153 East 104th Street, discuss the upcoming tenant rebate with Telemundo reporter Ricardo Villarini

Hope Launches Beautification Plan for its East Harlem Gardens

This spring, Hope will bring four community gardens to life with support of private and public partners, including City Year, Council on the Environment of NYC, Goldman Sachs, and the Troy-Built company.

On May 16, Volunteers from Goldman Sachs and City Year New York will team up with Hope staff, board members, and tenants to refurbish Hope's "New Frontiers" garden, located at 425-27 East 115th Street. The scope of work will include top soiling, planting and painting of existent benches, and the possible painting of an art mural against the park wall.

On May 18, Hope staff and board will be joined by elected officials, local youth, storyteller, and representatives from Troy-Bilt for a dedication ceremony for an innovative, new community reading garden located within the Modesto "Tin" Flores Community Garden on Lexington Avenue near 104th Street.

Hope's hallmark vest pocket park will house an innovative, new community reading garden filled with flowers, plants and benches. "The new reading garden will help preserve and enhance this historic community park and create a



Architect Marius Calin (left) presents garden modification plans to Hope Board President Roger Caban (center), Yolanny Rodriguez (2nd from left) and Carmen Vasquez (right)

wonderful setting for community events," said Bill Jacoby, Hope's Executive Director. "It will also serve as an inviting and peaceful setting for children and adults to read while gaining an appreciation of their local environment. The community reading garden will be designed and constructed by Troy-Bilt's expert Landscapes America team, and we are most grateful to Troy Bilt for this wonderful contribution to the

neighborhood," added Jacoby.

The momentum continues as volunteers from Goldman Sachs and City Year New York revamp Hope's "Harlem Village" garden, located on 117th Street and Second Avenue. The May 19th overhaul will include top soil and landscaping, enhancing the outer fence, and installing benches on either side of the garden's walk-way, and an area for BBQ grilling, with refreshments, tools and other materials provided by Credit Suisse. "Hope's aim is to develop the park as a suitable center stage location for an uptown 'Poetas con Café' cultural program," explained Board Chair, Roger Caban.

On June 2, Hope staff will then join volunteers from the Council on the Environment of New York City to work on yet another community garden at 2030 Lexington Avenue ("La Casita"). Work during that project will include top soiling, planting and painting of existent benches.



Hope's Modesto Flores Garden on Lexington Avenue

The Hope Herald

EDITING / LAY OUT

Marina Ortiz
Robin LeBaron

PHOTOGRAPHY

Marina Ortiz
Yolanny Rodriguez

TRANSLATION

Yolanny Rodriguez
Carmen Vasquez

Ortiz-Wittenberg Tenant Wins Four-Year College Scholarship

Christina Cordero, 18, a tenant from Hope's Ortiz-Wittenberg building, has been awarded a National Puerto Rican Day Parade four-year scholarship to Franklin & Marshall College in Lancaster, Pennsylvania in conjunction with the school's F&M Posse Scholarship program. The award includes institutional grants up to \$100,000 and needs-based funds through its Subsidized Stafford Loan Program.

Christina and her family have already received their invitation to attend the National Puerto Rican Day Parade's Scholarship Awards Reception at the Marriott Marquis Hotel on April 26, and she has already been provided with \$1,000 to help prepare for her upcoming studies.

Ms. Cordero will also be featured in the 11th Annual National Puerto Rican Day Parade on June 11 as she rides a special float for exemplary students, while her parents will be provided with V.I.P. seating in the Review Stand on Fifth Avenue.

Christina and her family have also been given free tickets to the Parade's Annual Spring Concert and the Annual Breakfast on June 11.

Her mother, Gracie Cordero, was ecstatic upon learning of her daughter's achievement. "I'm so happy for Christina," she said. "I know that she will achieve whatever she wants in life."

Although Christina had once participated in the Puerto Rican Day Parade back in junior high school, the teenager had no idea that the experience would prove to have lasting results.

Parade officials had Christina in mind for a scholarship, but were unable to track down the above-average student until late last year. What a surprise it was for Christina when she received a note in the mail informing her of the scholarship award.

After attending a college fair and several recruitment interviews, Christina chose Franklin & Marshall as one of her three top choices because of



Ortiz-Wittenberg tenants Christina Cordero and her mother Gracie at the ceremony announcing college scholarship winners.



their international studies program. She was also impressed, she says, by the "quiet and lovely setting," she saw when she went to visit the school with her mother,

Christina plans to major in business, and looks forward to the chance to learn study abroad during her senior and junior years.

"I was born and raised in New York," she explains, "I'd would like to take this opportunity to learn what else is out there. I want to get a different feel for the rest of the world, and then return to help my family and my community."

For now, Christina plans to spend the summer with her family before taking off for college in the fall with the brand new Dell laptop she's received to help her started.

Residente del Edificio Ortiz-Wittenberg Gana Cuatro-Año Beca Colegial

Christina Cordero de 18 años, residente del edificio Ortiz-Wittenberg, recibió una beca de cuatro años por \$100,000 del Día Nacional del Desfile Puertorriqueño para ir a la universidad Franklin & Marshall en Lancaster Pennsylvania. Los oficiales del Desfile pensaron en Christina para esta beca desde su participación en el desfile unos años

atrás. El año pasado, los oficiales revisaron el índice de los estudiantes sobresalientes. Christina recibió la notificación por correo para su sorpresa y felicidad. Después de ir a una feria y a varias entrevistas de reclutamiento, Christina eligió Franklin & Marshall College por su programa de estudios internacionales y por el ambiente tranquilo y afable de la institución. Christina tiene planeado estudiar negocios y participar de estudios en el extranjero en sus últimos años de universidad. Christina estará disfrutando de su familia hasta el final del verano. Su madre, Gracie Cordero, la ha acompañado a sus entrevistas, visitas a los campus y la entrega de premio, y la seguirá apoyando con orgullo.

Hope-Bluestone Partnership Picked to Develop Affordable Housing in East Harlem *Application for Development of 69 New Affordable Homes Approved by H.P.D.*

A partnership between Hope Community, Inc. and the Bluestone Group was awarded the opportunity to develop 69 units of housing on ten scattered sites in East Harlem. The award was one of several announced by the Bloomberg Administration at a February 23 press conference for the Cornerstone Program, which makes City-owned land available for affordable housing development.

The project will include 51 units of cooperative for-sale housing, 16 low-income rental units, and one townhouse duplex. Forty percent of the units will be designated for households making between 50% and 80% of the Area Median Income, and another 40% for those between 100% and 130% of AMI.

The project architect, Curtis + Ginsburg, L. P. will incorporate the latest "green" design principles, and the project will qualify for the "LEED Silver" rating, which indicates a high level of environmentally friendly and energy-efficient design.

"Hope is tremendously concerned about the rapid gentrification of East Harlem", said Hope Executive Director Bill Jacoby. "Accordingly, the project was designed to conform to Community Board 11 affordability and design guidelines. Three-quarters of the units will have two or three bedrooms to meet the needs of families; at least half will



Hope Community's Nellie Plumey, Robin LeBaron, Stephen Starensier, and William Jacoby with HPD Commissioner Shaun Donovan and Ira Lichtiger and Sara B. Herbstman of the Bluestone Organization at a February 23rd press conference

be set aside for East Harlem residents."

The Bluestone Group is a full-service real estate development company with experience and expertise in site selection, planning, financing, construction, marketing and management of residential and mixed use properties throughout the Metropolitan New York area.

Asociación de Hope-Bluestone Escogió a Desarrollar la vivienda razonable en Harlem Oriental

Una sociedad entre Hope Community y la organización Bluestone tendrá la oportunidad de desarrollar 69 viviendas en 10 sitios de East Harlem. Los ganadores del concurso "Cornerstone" se anunciaron en una rueda de prensa el 23 de febrero. "Cornerstone" es un programa de la administración de Bloomberg que cede los últimos lotes de terreno de la ciudad para desarrollar vivienda asequibles. El proyecto incluirán 51

viviendas cooperativas para la venta, 16 para rentar a familias con bajos ingresos y una casa duplex. El proyecto se desarrollará bajo los estándares más modernos de salud ambiental, eficiencia energética y diseño. Tres cuartas partes de las unidades tendrán 2 o 3 dormitorios para suplir las necesidades de las familias y por los menos la mitad de todas las unidades se reservarán para residentes de East Harlem.



An illustration showing the various sites included the Cornerstone program.

Hope Community Helps Launch Asthma Prevention Program

Hope Community, Inc. has partnered with the East Harlem Asthma Working Group (EHAWG) in a prevention and treatment program.

The pilot was launched at an Open House held on February 21. Hope staff will help register households with Asthma sufferers to receive free preventative materials and follow-up supervision.

Elements of the project include: an individual assessment of each child by a specialist; regular home follow-up visits; lectures on integrated pest management (ITM); and the provision of supplies including dust mite covers for bed linens, a year's supply of Lysol, 409, boric acid, pesticides, and dust swiffers, among other cleaning products.

Program coordinator Delfina

Cruz has also set up two sample children's rooms to demonstrate the do's and don'ts in reducing asthma triggers.

Hope Community, Inc. has also partnered with EHAWG on the 6th Annual Asthma Symposium to be held from 10:00 am to 2:00 pm on Saturday, May 6 at Beacon Center JHS 45 (2351 First Avenue and 120th Street).

Topics will include Integrated Pest Management, Asthma and Obesity, Indoor Allergens and Exposure to Tobacco Smoke. Free breakfast and lunch, free



Hope tenants received free checkups at a Hope-sponsored Health Fair held in November 2005.



childcare and IPM control supplies will also be provided. Other amenities include free childcare and raffles.

The East Harlem Asthma Working Group is a coalition of residents, activists, and professionals from diverse backgrounds such as health, education, and housing. Its membership is a mosaic of individuals ranging from medical doctors to concern parents who want to make a difference in the East Harlem community. For more information, call (212) 534-4735 or by email: ehawg@verizon.net.

Hope Community Ayuda a Lanzar el Programa de la Prevención del Asma

Hope Community ha iniciado una sociedad con el East Harlem Asthma Working Group (EHAWG), un programa de prevención y

tratamiento del asma. Empleados de Hope inscribirán inquilinos que sufren de asma para que reciban materiales, información y tratamiento gratis. El sábado, 6 de Mayo, se celebrará un simposium sobre el asma de 10:00 am a 2:00 pm en el Beacon Center JHS 45 (2351 de la primera avenida por la calle 120). EHAWG es una coalición de residentes, activistas y profesionales de la vivienda, la educación y la salud. Para registrarse o para mayor información llame al (212) 534-4735, o envíe un email a ehawg@verizon.net.

Free Tutoring, ESL and Dance Classes in Hope Buildings

Hope Community has recently partnered with a number of local agencies to provide a variety of free programs for Hope tenants and East Harlem residents.

Bilingual, after-school tutoring to elementary and junior high school students (ages 6-15) is now available twice weekly at Hope's Ortiz-Wittenberg apartment building courtesy of Esperanza del Barrio.

Free dance classes are also held in the building every Thursday for youth (8 to 18 years). Led by Katyiria Rotestan, the sessions run through spring and cover Hip-Hop, Salsa, and Basic Ballroom dancing. The culmination of the dance lessons will be a special youth performance at Hope's upcoming Annual Gala.

Hope Community and Esperanza del Barrio are also co-sponsoring adult English as a Second Language (ESL) classes every Monday and Wednesday in the community room at 2022 Lexington Avenue. The



Ortiz-Wittenberg kids at a tutoring class

sessions are open to all East Harlem residents and include free one-on-one instruction from an experienced bilingual tutor.

Members of two Ortiz-Wittenberg tenant groups – WIM (Women in Motion) and OWKiC (Kid's Club) – recently held an open house offering home-made food and used clothing and books for sale to raise funds for upcoming summer activities. Entertainment during the event included music, dance

performances and several raffles.

The Ortiz-Wittenberg Kid's Club then staged a public reading of "Romeo and Juliet: The Drama of a Lovely Building," a short skit on tenant relations and recycling. The presentation was written by members of the youth club and directed by Hope Community's Activity Coordinator, Yolanny Rodriguez Torres to dramatize the proper methods of garbage disposal.



Members of the OWKiC (Kid's Club) take a break after a March 30th performance at Ortiz-Wittenberg.



Ortiz-Wittenberg Residence opens its doors to the community during a March 25 Book & Bake Sale

Highlights of Community Events

AHA Holds Storyteller's Circle: Reading, Panel & Book Signing at Ortiz-Wittenberg



Board Chairman Roger Caban and Association of Hispanic Arts' Executive Director Nicholas Arture co-hosted a "Latinas in Literature" reading held in Hope's Ortiz-Wittenberg community room on March 30. The Women's History Month event was sponsored by AHA and featured writers Aracelis Girmay and Malin Alegria, who read from their most recent works and discussed the joys and challenges of publishing with the mostly young audience.

Carlos Rios Senior Residents Celebrate March Birthdays



On Friday, March 31, the Carlos Rios Tenants Association in conjunction with Tenant Activities Coordinator Yolanny Rodriguez held a special gathering to celebrate the birthdays of three senior residents of Carlos Rios: Catalino Alago, Aida Rodriguez and Ana de Garcia. In addition to the cake and soft drinks, fresh-cooked pastelitos (meat patties) were brought by Carmen Concepcion, a tenant from Ortiz-Wittenberg residence.

Bill Jacoby Shares Concerns About "Uptown New York" Project During Town Hall Meeting



"Gentrification is an issue of great concern to Hope's board and staff. We do not want a northern annex of the Upper East Side," said Hope's Executive Director Bill Jacoby in his statement on the proposed "Uptown NY" development project. His testimony was one of hundreds presented during a March 28 Town Hall meeting sponsored by Manhattan Borough President Scott M. Stringer, Community Board 11, and Councilwoman Melissa Mark-Viverito. Mr. Jacoby was joined at the meeting by Board Chair Roger Caban, Community Relations Manager Carmen Vasquez, and other senior staff.

Hope Attends Esperanza del Barrio's 3rd Anniversary Benefit



On April 7, Hope Community's Bill Jacoby, Robin LeBaron, Carmen Vasquez, Yolanny Rodriguez, and Marina Ortiz attended Esperanza del Barrio's 3rd Anniversary dinner at the Julia de Burgos Latino Cultural Center. Amenities included typical Mexican dishes donated by members of the organization, poetry and DJ music courtesy of Esperanza youth. A number of local officials, including NYC Councilwoman Melissa Mark-Viverito and NYS Assemblyman Adam Clayton Powell were cited for their ongoing support. Hope Community was also recognized and Community Relations Manager Carmen Vasquez addressed the attendees.

Profile of Hope Zone Superintendent Victor Guzman



Victor Guzman has been with Hope Community since 1997 when he began as a superintendent of a building on 115th Street. Within one year, he was promoted to supervise nine buildings on East 109th street.

After nine years of service and loyalty, Victor was promoted to Zone Manager in March 2006.

Mr. Guzman first heard about Hope Community when studying building maintenance to gain accreditation for his work experience. After meeting superintendents from Hope Community, he contacted the organization and was hired.

Victor has received training in electricity, plumbing, general building maintenance, and fire safety from New York University and Bronx Community College.

"If you persevere and put your all in there you can get ahead," he offers. "I've been given great opportunities for advancement and growth through continuing education – with my tuition paid by Hope Community."

"I consider Hope 'la tierra prometida' (the promised land) for people who want to live well with a small salary," Guzman says. "We provide the best-quality services available to lower income tenants. We clean our buildings every day, make maintenance and repairs within 48 hours or less, while most emergencies are attended to immediately."

As a Zone Manager, Victor now works to ensure that the agency's buildings are in compliance with all regulations and standards and that all violations are being properly corrected. He also supervises building supers, porters, and other maintenance staff.

Mr. Guzman is quick to mention that the maintenance department has improved along with property management. "We now work together, hand-in-hand, to make things happen," he says.

Victor also offers a few tips on ways tenants can ease their relationship to Hope. "Give the new administration a chance to prove itself. When it comes to complaints, be sure to follow proper protocol by making sure to contact the right person or department."

"We also need to share responsibility with the tenants," he notes, "because some don't appreciate what they have: a nice apartment, great service, and low rent. There are always a few tenants who don't understand their role in helping to keep the building well-maintained."

"East Harlem is a community that is coming out from the ashes; like a phoenix," he concludes. "We need the support of our residents to keep on growing, so that our children will continue to reap the benefits of the hard work we are now doing."

37th Annual
Hope Community
Gala Event
"Hope in Motion"



SAVE THE DATE!
Thursday, June 8 - 6:30-9:30 pm
El Museo del Barrio, 1230 Fifth Avenue (Bet. 104-105th Sts.)

Please RSVP to Carmen Vasquez at Hope Community, Inc.
(212) 860-8821, Ext. 162 or email: cvasquez@hopeco.org

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